



## PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - Middle/Junior high schools
  - High schools
  - K-12 schools
- TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
  - Suburban
  - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	28	27	55
K	40	41	81
1	42	40	82
2	41	39	80
3	42	37	79
4	35	45	80
5	39	42	81
6	41	40	81
7	39	43	82
8	35	38	73
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	382	392	774

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 7 % Asian
  - 6 % Black or African American
  - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 75 % White
  - 7 % Two or more races
- 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2017 – 2018 school year: <1%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	0
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	0
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %  
0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %  
 Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services: 16 %  
120 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>90</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>78</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>19</u> Emotional Disturbance  | <u>5</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 7

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	18
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	73
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	13
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 11:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2018.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes  No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 1992

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

River Oaks Baptist School prepares its students to meet life's challenges and lead tomorrow's world through superior educational programming undergirded by faith in Jesus Christ.

## PART III – SUMMARY

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River Oaks Baptist School (ROBS) was founded 64 years ago as a mission of the River Oaks Baptist Church—a neighborhood congregation in central Houston. For a number of years, ROBS was known only to the communities around its campus, who thought of it as a sweet little neighborhood school. But as time passed, a new culture began to take shape. Year after year, ROBS elevated the academic excellence, all the while holding true to the spiritual values upon which it was founded. Today ROBS is a premier academic destination for students from across the greater Houston area. ROBS has grown from a one-room school for 30 preschoolers and kindergarteners into an independent school serving 853 students from preschool through eighth grade (this number includes 78 children in our 2- and 3-year-old programs). When it opened, children of church members comprised the entire student body. Today the school draws students from more than 40 zip codes around the Houston area. Current school families are multi-denominational, with only 11 percent identifying as Baptist and 26 percent representing diverse ethnicities. When it opened, the school employed one teacher and one assistant. It has grown over the years into a robust and highly credentialed faculty and staff, more than 50 percent of whom hold advanced degrees. Slowly over time, campus facilities expanded to accommodate the growing student body and increased academic and athletic programming: an official education building in 1980, a playground in 1984, a field and track in 1987, a library media center in 1996. As the city grew around the original church campus, the school has strategically and efficiently repurposed existing spaces to accommodate the growing student needs. In 2015, ROBS purchased adjoining property that will allow the school to build a new middle school building designed around the school’s project-based, skills-driven, STEAM curriculum. When it opens in 2020, it will house a blue-box theater for drama productions, an advanced robotics lab and maker space, dedicated music rooms for instrumental and choral groups, visual arts studios, science labs, and outdoor learning areas. The mom of a current 9th grader (recent ROBS graduate) emailed the school in October to relay a conversation she had with her daughter following a high school event where she ran into a bunch of former classmates. “Everyone says ROBS ends in 8th grade. They should really tell everyone only the schooling ends. Not ROBS. You’re part of ROBS forever.” Her sentiment is common among ROBS families. Students, parents, graduates, teachers, grandparents of students, and others are cherished members of the school community. Alumni can be seen on campus daily visiting their former teachers, small group advisors, and old friends. Many seek out their teachers to tell them how they influenced their career choice, and many still find them teaching here. The ROBS community embraces and cultivates connections over a lifetime. Indeed, 179 of the 853 students are children of ROBS alumni (more than 1/5 of the student body). Careful, strategic planning based on sound academic principles and a love for students has guided school decisions at every turn. In 1959 ROBS did its first self-study, recommending that the school expand through sixth grade. The school continues to evaluate and reevaluate its performance both on a short-term and longer-term basis. ROBS surveys families at the end of each academic year to determine its strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. The administrative team analyzes the results and develops a game plan for addressing any concerns. The school also conducts a community-wide strategic planning process on a 5-year cycle, which serves as a playbook for the school’s strategic course.

A few of the recent accomplishments that were guided by the last strategic plan include: Preschool, Lower School, and Middle School curricula redesign integrating the “6 C’s” of 21st century learning—critical-thinking, collaboration, communications, creativity, character, and cross-cultural competency; strategic redirection of professional development dollars to train teachers on best practices within a 21st-century learning model, like designing lessons that compel students to think more deeply and more critically, engaging students in longer time blocks, and constructing authentic learning assessments.

Other elements include enhancement of fine arts programming, global learning opportunities, and project-based STEAM activities; the addition of sixth-grade sports; creation of a multi-phase master campus plan; and Phase I of master campus plan – Middle School building, leadership center, and underground parking garage. Long before character traits like grit and perseverance became buzzwords in education, ROBS embraced a holistic educational philosophy that balances vigorous academics and robust character development. The mission also articulates the value of respecting differences, developmentally-appropriate nurturing, and the all-important partnership between school and parents. ROBS has always recognized that intellectual, physical, spiritual, moral, and social growth are interdependent. ROBS’ holistic approach has

set it apart as one of the best schools in Houston. Moreover, the culture has set the School apart as a place where every student is learning and every student is loved.

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

#### 1a. Reading/English language arts:

ROBS standards, addressed by the Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Continuum, PK-8 (2017), were chosen because of their comprehensiveness; they guide teachers in planning and assessing learning opportunities. Detailed descriptions of comprehension strategies for thinking within/ beyond/about texts and specific technology-based programs (e.g., IXL) promote proficient readers. The guided reading continuum (K-3) provides access to differentiated reading level information for selecting individually-based goals. Shared, interactive, and modeled writing with support from mentor texts assists students in mastering the complex process of writing and its purpose of communicating the author's meaning to a variety of audiences. Fourth grade and middle school students supplement their scope and sequence with Jane Schaffer writing, as well as project-based learning opportunities, based on transdisciplinary inquiry questions. Middle school ELA students read for a variety of purposes; middle school ELA classes emphasize the exploration of literature and the analysis of text through the development of the multi-paragraph thesis essay. In middle school, grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling, and vocabulary are taught in connection with reading and writing.

Teachers regularly assess students' instructional levels through running records (K-3). Additionally, teachers use the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System to match readers with the appropriate text, to plan instruction based on needs, and to track students over time. We use the Children's Progress Academic Assessment (PK-2) four times a year and the Comprehensive Testing Program (3-7) once a year as comparative data across years and skills to determine trends. Literacy work stations (K-4), in concert with small group reading instruction or individual routine assessments, support students in areas of the Literacy Continuum.

The ELA scope and sequence includes the Teacher's College Units of Study for reading and writing workshop in kindergarten to grade 3, an approach that honors varying levels in lower school classrooms. Short and explicit mini-lessons presented to the whole class include: a connection to provide context; a teaching point for demonstration or explanation; engagement in strategy practice through active involvement; and reframing teaching points to link learning with previous experiences. Intertwined in these mini-lessons are opportunities for students to practice specific skills related to print work (decoding or encoding), fluency, or comprehension.

#### 1b. Mathematics:

Area high schools routinely comment on the strength of ROBS mathematics curriculum. High school math teachers say they are able to identify graduates from ROBS by their strong number sense, depth of understanding, and ability to think critically. Recognizing the importance of a successful transition to high school, ROBS considers exit-level mastery standards, setting grade-level goals that are both developmentally appropriate and challenging.

The School's core curriculum adheres to the mathematics content and process standards and is on grade level through fourth grade. Beginning in fifth grade, ROBS strategically bundles consecutive grade-level standards which enables all graduating students to complete Algebra I; about 20% of students also complete high school geometry.

From the play-based Preschool program using manipulatives to the high school level courses offered in Middle School, the math program provides an instructional sequence that engages and empowers students. Concepts are introduced with hands-on learning (concrete), developed with representational (pictorial) models, and solidified with symbolic explanations (abstract). Students demonstrate learning through game-based play, presenting their work, and peer collaboration and communication. Upper elementary and middle school students also demonstrate conceptual understanding by using technology to model real-world applications. Technology also supports adaptive practice from kindergarten through eighth grade.

Instruction is differentiated at all grades, intentionally extending and expanding content. Students in grades 1 - 8 who are closely approaching grade-level standards attend teacher tutorials; elementary students who require additional support work with the mathematics learning specialist.

Assessments are one component of each student's learning portfolio. Benchmark assessments are used twice yearly in early childhood to provide targeted support. Students also take standardized tests annually, Children's Progress Academic Assessment (CPAA) in PreK - grade 2 and Education Records Bureau Comprehensive Testing Program (ERB-CTP) IV in grades 3-7. Standardized test results are analyzed yearly, focusing on the performance of the school, grade levels, student cohorts, and individual students. This analysis informs decisions regarding curriculum and instruction.

### **1c. Science:**

Science curriculum in grades K-8 aligns with Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). NGSS allow students to think of science learning not as memorization of disconnected facts, but as a broad understanding of integrated and interrelated concepts. They connect scientific principles to real-world situations, allowing for more engaging and relevant instruction that teaches complicated topics more clearly. NGSS also connects learning over multiple years, strengthening engagement and deepening students' understanding of core ideas. The science units in the K-2 band of NGSS spiral in the 3rd-5th band. For example, first grade Sound and Light spirals in fourth grade with Energy and Sound, and second grade Plant and Animal Relationships spirals in fifth grade with Molecules to Organisms. In grades K-2, students take part in three twelve-week in-depth units, which also include engineering time in the Maker Space and in the Science Lab. In fourth grade, students put their scientific and engineering practices to good use as they discover the mechanism by which muscles control the movement of the bones. By building a robotic model of a finger based on how their own fingers work, students can then construct an explanation for how fingers move. In middle school (grades 5-8) students take on the role of a scientist or engineer to investigate a real-world phenomena-based problem. Students write scientific arguments based on evidence they have collected, connecting their reasoning to the evidence of their claim. In fifth grade, pairs of students collaborate in their research of the terrain of Mars from NASA maps and articles. They determine the best landing area and then build a Mars Rover with special adaptations for that geological terrain and then write a paper using claim, evidence, and reasoning. In their study of geology in sixth grade, each student chooses particular beach sand from over 80 tubs of sand from beaches all over the world to determine the minerals/sediments that created the sand, the source rock, and the distance the sediment travel. Experiments, data collection, and research back up their claim as to the origin of the sand. Collaborative problem-based learning continues in seventh grade Life Science and eighth grade Integrated Physics and Chemistry. Students develop expertise and a deep understanding of foundational scientific phenomena through repeated experiences within a wide variety of contexts. Students gather evidence through firsthand investigations and digital sources. They learn that there is not always one right answer. Assessments are a combination of teacher-generated and student-created projects. All students from grades 2-8 have access to technology-based support. Each student in grades 2-3 has an iPad and in fourth grade, the students have access to an iPad and a laptop. In middle school, all students have a laptop.

### **1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement**

Core content for social studies begins in Kindergarten with studies of the community. As students progress through Lower School and Middle School, their studies broaden to state, country, and finally the world with eighth grade American history. Although standards are aligned with Texas Education Agency (TEA) standards for social studies, grade-level units do not mimic TEA standardized units. By the end of fourth grade, students have covered the early explorers of North America through the American Revolution. Fifth grade picks up with the Revolution and continues through Reconstruction and growth to the West. Sixth and seventh grades explore two years of ancient world civilizations, and eighth graders complete a survey course of American history from colonization to 9/11.

Instructional approaches vary, including project-based learning, differentiated instruction, document-based questions, direct instruction, and reinforcement of reading strategies in the content area. Research plays an

important role in every grade level that touches not only on history, but geography, economics, government, culture, and religious studies. The teaching of skills that will help students succeed in life is a filter through which ROBS faculty approach every unit of social studies. Assessments are tiered so that from one grade level to the next the students understand the progression of skill requirements for each new grade level. Learning standards are carefully aligned with the Texas Education Agency per unit. ROBS' spiraled approach reinforces units and themes throughout the years so that frequent exposure will foster better learning and transfer. The ultimate goal of the social studies program is to promote in its students civic responsibility and leadership.

**1e. For secondary schools:**

**1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:**

ROBS' early childhood program fosters the development of the whole child—cognitively, socially, physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually. Through exploration and play, preschoolers experience literacy, mathematics, science, and engineering. Children grow creatively and physically through process-based art, music lessons and motor skills classes.

Both Preschool and Lower School use Fountas and Pinnell's Literacy Continuum to vertically align language and literacy curricula. Preschool's playful, hands-on mathematics program is based on Everyday Mathematics, also adopted in K-3. Hands-on science and engineering units prepare preschool students for K-3's rigorous NGSS units.

Preschool's focus on active investigation and discovery helps create confident lower school students. Purposeful phonological awareness and alphabetic instruction in preschool allows children to transition smoothly into K-3 reading and writing. Rich preschool math experiences help create K-3 problem solvers with strong number sense. Inquiry-based preschool science experiences create curious, engaged learners in the primary grades.

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Fine Arts programming at ROBS follows the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards. In grades K-4, students attend visual arts classes once per week for an hour and music classes twice a week for 30 minutes. Arts projects are tied to social studies, science, and language arts curriculum when appropriate. Music students perform either a musical or choral concert each year. Fifth and sixth grade students follow a rotation format through the year where they attend art, music, and theater classes. In seventh and eighth grades, students choose a semester elective and participate in art, music, and theater. Eighth grade art students produce an end of semester art show. Music students perform both through field trips and service opportunities and have an end of semester theater production in both grades. ROBS is very fortunate to provide daily Physical Education as an integral part of the total educational process for grades K-8. The P.E. program is movement-based, planned, and sequential, contributing to student growth physically, cognitively, and socially. Each class teaches students skills, effort, sportsmanship, and knowledge necessary to perform a variety of physical activities.

Daily P.E. helps instill in students a lifelong daily habit of physical activity and sets a foundation for healthy, active lifestyles. The ROBS Spanish program spans from Readiness (3's program) to eighth grade. In addition to equipping students with a second language, the program prepares and inspires students to connect, empathize, and understand cultures outside of their own in order to become active participants in a global society. The curriculum uses a wide array of vivid resources, both traditional and digital, to foster an innovative classroom environment where our students feel confident and prepared to pursue Spanish II and III at their choice of high school. The Spanish teacher team collaborates to find new and innovative instructional practices to create fresh and inspiring classroom environments. Their efforts foster student motivation, a love for learning, collaboration, risk-taking, and the development of critical thinking skills necessary to reach proficiency in the target language.

Technology, Library, and Media at ROBS fall under the umbrella of innovation with a heavy focus on the 6 C's of 21st century learning. Teachers work with students in the library to conduct inquiry, curation, and exploration in a global learning community. Students are given hands-on opportunities to use media as useful learning tools. For example, students produce daily morning video announcements that are broadcast to the entire school. In addition to showing the kids the value of technological tools, it gives them a unique opportunity to develop leadership and collaboration skills. Eighth grade students produce the announcements; fourth grade students serve as the talent. Character education is infused throughout the school day. Christian principles and values undergird programming. For example, the Middle School advisory program provides a space for character growth. Advisories—small groups led by a teacher mentor—provide safe havens for students to think, pray, question and grow. The central objective is to build a meaningful and nurturing connection within the advisory group where advisors support and advocate for students and students feel valued and respected. Advisory focuses on developing a strong character to meet life's challenges with integrity and confidence. In Lower School, students participate in classroom character lessons that focus on developing and fostering empathy and resilience. In addition, students participate in lessons related to personal safety and online safety each year. During character lessons, students have the opportunity to engage in conversations and share ideas and experiences that relate to a particular topic. Beyond cultivating empathy and resilience in young students, character lessons strengthen bonds within classroom communities. ROBS' prevention and student wellness program focuses on educating parents, faculty, and students about a variety of topics, ranging from cyber safety to drug and alcohol prevention and healthy peer relationships. These prevention and wellness initiatives in combination with the classroom character lessons and Advisory program are an integral part of the school mission to build students with strong character. Nurturing the spirit is an important component of ROBS' mission to grow students in knowledge, character, and faith. Faith-based Christian programming therefore permeates campus life at ROBS. Through weekly chapel lessons, daily devotionals, Bible classes, and advisory lessons, ROBS' spiritual education grounds students for a lifelong relationship with Christ.

### **3. Special Populations:**

River Oaks Baptist School (ROBS) has approximately 853 students, ranging from ages 2 to 14. The School's mission statement affirms respect for the diversity and dignity of the individual, each uniquely created by God with special qualities and gifts for development. Recognizing each student's individual gifts means accommodating a huge variety of learning styles, ability levels, and unique characteristics within each classroom. Teachers at ROBS are highly qualified and trained to implement research-based instructional strategies while meeting the learner at his or her individual level and providing opportunities in which they can be stretched and can grow in a safe and nurturing environment. At the basic classroom level, teachers implement differentiation across content, process, learning environment, and product. Students are instructed at their personal level and provided with materials that meet them where they are. Students are provided with tiered activities in which they study the same content but do different activities or use different learning processes. Teachers utilize flexible grouping and flexible seating allowing students to choose what modalities work best for them and providing many opportunities for choice. Teachers also allow for different options of expression and vary products that demonstrate student understanding. Teachers present content in ways that are effective for visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners to make instruction accessible to all. Students are encouraged to use tools within the classroom such as standing desks, wobble stools, noise-canceling headphones, choice boards, visuals, iPads, schedules, break areas, whisper phones, highlighters, and reading tracking strips to support their learning.

In addition to what is available within the classroom, outside the classroom there is a network of support. ROBS has three learning specialists, one in each department. The "Student Support Team," which includes the Head, Assistant Head, Counselor, and Learning Specialist from each department, regularly meets with each teacher to discuss their students and supports their social, emotional, and academic well-being. For students who display a need for academic intervention, teachers provide tutorials before school twice per week beginning in first grade. If a student continues to show need in a specific area, the learning specialist gives support to the teacher in the form of strategies, tools, observations, and working with the student. On campus, a full-time reading specialist conducts reading intervention, phonological awareness and decoding work with students in kindergarten through second grade. The student support office also employs a math

specialist dedicated to Lower School students.

The learning specialists in Lower School and Middle School are currently in the process of being re-certified in gifted and talented best practices. When students are struggling and they do not appear to be progressing even after additional support, the support team refers the students to be assessed by an independent psychologist in a psychoeducational evaluation. Once the team receives the report, the learning specialist reviews the results and creates a learning plan based upon the psychologist's diagnoses and recommendations.

ROBS offers extended time, preferential seating, reduced spelling penalty, note-taking support, keyboarding, scantron waiver, and foreign language waiver. Additionally, students are permitted to take their assessments in a small group setting in the Student Support Office which is quiet and provides space with reduced distractions. In the year 2017 – 2018, 120 of students at the Lower School (K-4) and Middle School (5-8) levels were served with accommodations to meet their individual needs. In addition to the accommodations provided, Lower School students with a diagnosis or academic need can receive reading tutoring, math tutoring, occupational therapy and/or speech therapy during the school day by outside professionals for students in kindergarten through fourth grade. Middle School students who have a learning plan or academic needs are eligible to receive tutoring on campus before or after school.

ROBS is fully committed to providing a rich educational environment for the varied needs within the student population. To meet the unique needs of our learners, ROBS provides students with the tools and strategies, helping them build a learning foundation for independence and success.

### **1. School Climate/Culture:**

Studies show that students are more motivated—and learn more—when they contribute real solutions to be shared with their community. Many schools embrace this research in theory. ROBS embraces it in practice, with a culture where students freely share new ideas and solutions. Students often walk into the Head of School’s office to talk about their concerns and ideas. Most importantly, school leadership promotes open dialogue and collaborative problem-solving by implementing many of the students’ suggestions. Last spring, two eighth grade students presented a proposal to ROBS leadership for an official school comfort dog. Through the Capstone Scholar program, a faculty mentor assisted the students in developing a research-based case for a comfort dog. The students studied the psychological, social, and emotional benefits of comfort dogs, particularly in school settings. Their case included compelling research: simply petting a dog can decrease levels of stress hormones, regulate breathing, and lower blood pressure. Their research also indicated that students often use a comfort dog as an excuse to visit the counselor’s office. In presenting their proposal, the students had to field questions about the risks and potential drawbacks of having a school comfort dog. Their sound argument and well-developed proposal convinced the board and administration to approve the request. Other student-led initiatives include a student council request to allow a broader range of footwear in the school dress policy; changing the school’s mascot; allowing music in the lunchroom. Not all requests are honored. But every single one is met with an open mind and collaborative spirit. The Head of School often responds to student requests by challenging them to think harder. What would make their proposal stronger? What research is missing? Which stakeholders will be affected? What are the direct and indirect costs? Any downstream effects? The challenge of developing a solution to something you care about and the validation of being successful empowers ROBS’ students as innovative leaders and strong critical thinkers. What’s more motivating than knowing you can have a positive influence on the world around you? ROBS promotes a culture of respect and value among teachers in a similar fashion—by engaging faculty in decisions and processes that affect them. This past fall the school conducted a formal national search for a new head of middle school. The executive council engaged Middle School teachers from every grade level and subject area in the interview process. Each participant weighed in on the ultimate decision.

The School has also established formal channels for open communication between faculty, staff, and leadership. The School Advisory Council (SAC) is a faculty, staff and school leadership group that meets quarterly to identify and resolve important problems and issues. SAC includes teacher representatives from each division, a special area teacher, and a staff member. It has become an effective conduit for open communication between the decision-makers and ROBS’ frontline educators. The School has also created a philanthropic platform to support teachers not just as educators, but as lifelong learners. The ROBS’ faculty grants program funds summer study, travel, and professional development opportunities for teachers. For example, last year language arts teachers attended the Creativity Workshop in Florence, Italy over spring break, and the maker space teacher attended a workshop about maker spaces in Sonoma, California. The eighth-grade class raises the money for the grants by selling refreshments at sports games and organizing other fundraisers throughout the year. The grants are also supported through a gift from a parent of two school graduates. ROBS teachers are well loved and respected, as demonstrated by the many ways students, parents, and leadership support them.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

The research is clear: parent engagement is critical to student success. ROBS is blessed to have an army of involved parents, grandparents, and other community partners. ROBS’ community is strong and inclusive, offering a variety of ways to be involved and feel connected. From campus activities and events to volunteer opportunities or virtual participation options, the School intentionally works to connect with all of its constituents. A primary source of connection is the ROBS Parent Association—a well-oiled, robust machine of school volunteers that keep programs vibrant and forward-thinking. Last year alone, parent volunteers contributed approximately 12,300 hours to ROBS, filling more than 2,000 volunteer positions. That includes more than 50 leadership positions. From running an online store for school merchandise to

serving lunch in the cafeteria or working a booth at the fall fair, the volunteers do the work of about 7 full-time employees. ROBS' annual character theme has become a powerful unifier for the community. At the beginning of each school year, ROBS announces a new character theme. Last year, "Love Does" became a unifying mantra for students, faculty, parents, siblings and others. Because character is instilled through practice and persistent effort, the theme bleeds into programs and activities all over campus—and beyond. Teachers connect science projects on the ecosystem to service projects cleaning the Galveston Bay. In addition to posting examples of Love Does on ROBS' social media sites, parents began to post examples of it in their own homes. Pictures of brothers and sisters sharing were tagged with #lovedoes. A first grader composed a song titled "Love Does" and sold albums to raise money for victims of Hurricane Harvey. The whole community wore Love Does rubber bracelets to show their solidarity. The Love Does character theme was a perfect backdrop for ROBS' annual All-School Day of Service on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Last year, over 350 ROBS students, parents, faculty, and staff volunteered (on a school holiday) to refurbish the library of McGowen Elementary School, which was damaged in Hurricane Harvey. Volunteers scrubbed floors and installed new carpet. They labeled, organized, and shelved more than 2,400 books—all collected by the ROBS community ahead of the service day—increasing the library's size more than six-fold. Preschoolers worked alongside fifth graders; teachers worked alongside students; parents worked alongside school custodians. The All-School Day of Service is a powerful community-building program for ROBS as well as for its Houston neighbors. ROBS' strategic planning process is a valuable tool for engaging parents and community members. Alumni, parents, past parents, teachers, staff, board, church, and others are invited to participate in a strategic thinking group exercise every five years. Online participation was offered for those who couldn't attend in person. The collective responses drive the ultimate strategic plan, which serves as a course outline for the school's future. Not only is everyone given a voice, but they are also given ownership of the school's future.

### **3. Professional Development:**

ROBS instills a deep love for learning, both for students and teachers. The School intentionally offers opportunities that engage and inspire teachers as much as they are expected to engage and inspire students. ROBS' instructional approach is designed to make lessons come alive in young minds. This is not schooling. This is passionate learning, and it is a pursuit that carries over into high school and throughout life. ROBS helps students and teachers discover their God-given gifts and celebrate the talents of others.

Each teacher sets professional goals on a yearly basis and meets with his/her Division Head throughout the year to achieve his/her goals. The Associate Head of School for Academics and the content area curriculum coordinator work with each individual teacher to create professional development plans. With the plan as a framework, teachers are guided toward appropriate professional development opportunities with School funds earmarked for this purpose. Professional development can be before, during or after the school day, as well as on weekends or during breaks as the teacher chooses.

Academic leadership guides the overall direction of professional development. The academic leadership team builds a three-year Professional Development plan and accompanying budget as influenced by teacher need, school direction, and assessment outcomes.

Professional development experiences can even include opportunities for character growth. Grants available through philanthropic gifts to the School have funded teacher pilgrimages to the Holy Land to retrace the steps of Jesus and Creativity Workshops in Prague, to name a few. Ultimately, teachers and staff members return to ROBS and share their newfound knowledge with peers and students. For example, following the Creativity Workshop, the librarian assembled a "Creativity Corner" in the library where Lower School students can tinker every morning before school starts.

### **4. School Leadership:**

River Oaks Baptist School believes that leadership is most effective when it's distributed among a team of individuals with different skillsets and experiences but a shared mission to spark and sustain a culture of passionate learning. ROBS purposefully works to maintain a collaborative leadership structure. The Head of School meets daily with her Executive Council, a small group of decision-makers who manage the School's strategic direction and ensure operational cohesiveness. The Executive Council is supported by

the Administrative Team which manages the day-to-day operations of the School. Finally, ROBS' curriculum coordinator team leads vertical and horizontal alignment of curriculum across all three divisions.

Effective leaders depend on responsive teams. Recognizing the importance of team dynamics, ROBS has established formal channels for open and honest vertical communication between the leadership team, teachers, and other staff members. Team, department, and council meetings have become a space where open two-way conversation occurs in a healthy and respectful way. Discontent is often diffused when teachers understand decisions more fully, and the Executive Council better understands the full effects of their decisions.

Smart leaders also plan for the future. The administrative team conducted a thorough succession planning exercise this year, identifying faculty and staff members with the core leadership competencies valued at River Oaks Baptist School. The administrative team crafted development plans specific to each prospective leader and his/her desired path.

This year the Executive Council guided the creation of a ROBS Databook to help measure performance year over year. It includes student achievement metrics, student satisfaction metrics, parent satisfaction metrics, high school matriculation data, and a whole host of financial and admission metrics. The ROBS Databook will be produced annually going forward and shared with the Board of Trustees. The Databook is, in essence, a yardstick for leadership accountability.

## PART VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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ROBS first opened its doors in 1955, and in the ensuing years has been regarded as a model independent school. This regard was confirmed recently with the completion of a \$65 million capital campaign with a focus on building a student-centered learning environment for Middle School students that would allow for increased collaboration, communication, and creativity. The new building would allow already innovative educators even more opportunities to engage students and their learning. ROBS also recognized the importance of strengthening the curriculum. To that end, ROBS engaged Dr. Heidi Hayes Jacobs, an internationally renowned curriculum expert to help map the curriculum within the framework of the 21st century learning model. The goals for the work with Dr. Hayes Jacobs included: 1. Taking advantage of Rubicon Atlas to map the curriculum as defined by River Oaks Baptist School; 2. Exploring tools to engage students and guide instruction and assessment; 3. Ensuring that the curriculum is aligned both horizontally among each set of grades, and vertically K-8 in each content area; 4. Ongoing professional development for teachers and administrators. Heidi worked with the Preschool, Lower School, and Middle School Division Heads, curriculum coordinators across all subjects, and the Associate Head of School for Academics to tackle these goals. Dr. Hayes Jacobs and the team focused on mapping the curriculum in Rubicon Atlas, updating it, and if necessary, cleaning it out. This process took just over two years to complete, and ongoing updates of Atlas Rubicon continues. Year three focused on innovating the curriculum. For example, ROBS reexamined how to properly assess student work and the importance of instructional coaching. At the end of year three, the ROBS curriculum coordinators and the administrative team were ready to implement, which became the focus of year four. Through workshops, weekly meetings with coordinators, and a focused determination to evaluate the curriculum standards, the curriculum was indeed vertically and horizontally aligned by the summer of 2018. During this current year, the curriculum work has evolved into a focus on highlighting the differentiation available in our curriculum as well as looking for new and innovative ways to differentiate. ROBS would not have been at this point without the work and support of Dr. Heidi Hayes Jacobs.

## PART VII – NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

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1. Non-public school association(s): Other

Identify the religious or independent associations, if any, to which the school belongs. Select the primary association first.

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status?      Yes X      No

3. What is the educational cost per student?      \$25590  
(School budget divided by enrollment)

4. What is the average financial aid per student?      \$15606

5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?      7%

6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?      9%

**PART VIII – ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS**

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**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math

**Test:** CPT-IV

**Grade:** 3

**Edition/Publication Year:** N/A

**Publisher:** ERB

**Scores are reported here  
as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	312
Number of students tested	78
Percent of total students tested	19.8
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Students with Disabilities</b>	
Average Score	295
Number of students tested	11
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math

**Test:** CPT-IV

**Grade:** 4

**Edition/Publication Year:** N/A

**Publisher:** ERB

**Scores are reported here as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	341
Number of students tested	79
Percent of total students tested	20.05
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Students with Disabilities</b>	
Average Score	330
Number of students tested	11
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math  
**Edition/Publication Year:** N/A

**Test:** CPT-IV  
**Publisher:** ERB

**Grade:** 5  
**Scores are reported here as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	360
Number of students tested	80
Percent of total students tested	20.3
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Students with Disabilities</b>	
Average Score	345
Number of students tested	19
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math

**Test:** CPT-IV

**Grade:** 6

**Edition/Publication Year:** N/A

**Publisher:** ERB

**Scores are reported here as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	373
Number of students tested	81
Percent of total students tested	20.56
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Students with Disabilities</b>	
Average Score	370
Number of students tested	15
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Math

**Test:** CPT-IV

**Grade:** 7

**Edition/Publication Year:** N/A

**Publisher:** ERB

**Scores are reported here as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	355
Number of students tested	76
Percent of total students tested	19.29
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Students with Disabilities</b>	
Average Score	346
Number of students tested	25
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** N/A

**Test:** CPT-IV  
**Publisher:** ERB

**Grade:** 3  
**Scores are reported here as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	342
Number of students tested	80
Percent of total students tested	20.15
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Students with Disabilities</b>	
Average Score	325
Number of students tested	12
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** N/A

**Test:** CPT-IV  
**Publisher:** ERB

**Grade:** 4  
**Scores are reported here as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	351
Number of students tested	79
Percent of total students tested	19.9
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Students with Disabilities</b>	
Average Score	344
Number of students tested	11
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** N/A

**Test:** CPT-IV  
**Publisher:** ERB

**Grade:** 5  
**Scores are reported here as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	364
Number of students tested	80
Percent of total students tested	20.15
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Students with Disabilities</b>	
Average Score	357
Number of students tested	19
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** N/A

**Test:** CPT-IV  
**Publisher:** ERB

**Grade:** 6  
**Scores are reported here as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	368
Number of students tested	81
Percent of total students tested	20.4
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Students with Disabilities</b>	
Average Score	357
Number of students tested	15
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**

**REFERENCED BY NATIONAL NORMS**

**Subject:** Reading/ELA  
**Edition/Publication Year:** N/A

**Test:** CPT-IV  
**Publisher:** ERB

**Grade:** 7  
**Scores are reported here as:** Scaled scores

School Year	2017-2018
Testing month	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	
Average Score	361
Number of students tested	77
Percent of total students tested	19.4
Number of students alternatively assessed	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>	
<b>1. Students with Disabilities</b>	
Average Score	354
Number of students tested	25
<b>2. Other 2</b>	
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Number of students tested	
<b>3. Other 3</b>	
Average Score	
Number of students tested	

**NOTES:**